

January 13, 2010

Washington, DC - Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis and Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-CA) announced today the release of \$150 million in Pathways Out of Poverty training grants that will in part be awarded to Latino communities as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. These green jobs grants will support job training that will lead to well paying jobs in a new clean economy.

“These ‘Pathways Out of Poverty’ grants will help workers in disadvantaged communities gain access to the good, safe and prosperous jobs of the 21st Century green economy,” said Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis. “Green jobs present tremendous opportunities for people who have the core skills and competencies needed in such well-paying and rapidly growing industries as energy efficiency and renewable energy.”

The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) will serve the communities of Watts, Willowbrook, and Florence-Graham with \$4,000,000 in funding that will train more than 900 participants in skills integral to the burgeoning green construction and retrofit industry.

Jobs for the Future, Inc., which serves Los Angeles, will receive \$7,997,936 in funding to provide basic education services and training for hundreds of participants to land green construction-related employment. In addition to education and job skills training, Pathways Out of Poverty grants emphasize the link between the knowledge and skills needed to land a job and the reliable transportation, child care, and other support needed to keep a job.

“These grants are direct investments in working families in Los Angeles that will not only advance the energy security of our nation, but also the economic security of our families,” said Rep. Linda Sánchez. “With these green job training efforts, we can support innovation and lift people out of poverty.”

Background on Recovery Act Pathways out of Poverty Grants:

For individuals who are living below or near the poverty line the current economic downturn has created a unique set of challenges and has heightened the need to find pathways out of poverty and into employment. These individuals may lack basic literacy and job readiness skills and they may face other barriers to employment, such as the need for childcare or transportation.

To assist individuals in meeting these challenges, the Department of Labor is investing in Pathways Out of Poverty grants, which will integrate training and supportive services into cohesive programs that will help targeted populations find pathways out of poverty and into economic self-sufficiency through employment in energy efficiency and renewable energy industries. Despite the economic downturn, these green industries present many potential opportunities for individuals to learn new skills and competencies, gain employment and advance along career pathways.

In order to most effectively serve the specific populations targeted by these grants, the Department of Labor encouraged applicants to focus project efforts in communities located within one or more contiguous Public Micro Data Areas (PUMAs) where poverty rates were 15% or higher. PUMAs are geographic areas designated by the U.S. Census Bureau.

These investments will prepare participants for employment within energy efficiency and renewable energy industries and are designed to:

- * Include sound recruitment and referral strategies for targeted populations;
- * Integrate basic skills and work-readiness training with occupational skills training, as necessary;
- * Combine supportive services with training services to help participants overcome barriers to employment, as necessary, and;
- * Provide training services at times and locations that are easily accessible to targeted populations.

Thirty-eight awards ranging from approximately \$1 million to \$8 million each were made to two categories of grantees: (1) National non-profit organizations with networks of local affiliates; and (2) local public organizations or private non-profit organizations. In both categories, projects will be implemented at the community level by partnerships that include non-profit organizations, the public workforce system, the education and training community, employers and industry-related organizations, and labor organizations.

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